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ABSTRACT

While some critics may point out the overabundance of college graduates in proportion to available jobs, Indiana is not admitting too many students at the higher education level. New technology has increased the demand for new occupations and a better educated work force. Emphasis must shift from quantitative growth--in student numbers, programs, and institutional complexity--to qualitative improvement. Universities cannot ignore the growing numbers of individuals returning to school, nor can they deny the function of higher education to teach people how to maintain skills over a lifetime. (BJD)

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PRESIDENT JOHN W. RYAN
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(THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS WERE GIVEN DURING A NATIONAL FORUM ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION PANEL DISCUSSION HELD WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1983 IN INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA. THE TITLE OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION WAS "ECONOMICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION: ARE WE OVEREDUCATING BY ADMITTING TOO MANY STUDENTS?")

GREETINGS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

WE CERTAINLY ARE NOT "OVER-EDUCATING" IN THE STATE OF INDIANA AND I SERIOUSLY QUESTION THE PREMISE THAT WE MIGHT BE DOING SO ELSEWHERE. I SAY THIS EVEN THOUGH I AM AWARE OF REPORTS BY THE BUREAU OF LABOR WHICH INDICATE COLLEGE GRADUATES WILL EXCEED THE NUMBER OF AVAILABLE JOBS THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY REQUIRED COLLEGE DEGREES.

WHATEVER THE PATTERN OF THE JOB MARKET OF THE PAST MAY HAVE BEEN, WE MUST NOT CHANNEL OUR THINKING ABOUT THE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF OUR STUDENTS AND OUR NATION. TO ASSUME THAT WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN YEARS PAST IS RELEVANT WOULD BE TO OVERLOOK THE THOUSANDS OF JOBS THAT HAVE BECOME MORE COMPLEX, REQUIRING MORE SOPHISTICATED PERFORMANCE ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO FILL THEM. RATHER WE HAVE A RADICALLY NEW, AND FASTER CYCLE--NEW TECHNOLOGY, NEW NEEDS, NEW WANTS, NEW SERVICES, NEW INVESTMENTS, NEW ENTREPRENEURS, NEW JOBS.

FURTHERMORE, NEW JOBS ARE BEING CREATED EVERY YEAR THROUGH NEW TECHNOLOGY. THE ELECTRONIC CHIP, OF COURSE, HAS GIVEN RISE TO AN ENTIREY NEW GROUP OF OCCUPATIONS; BUT CONSIDER THAT THE APPLICATION OF ANY OF A THOUSAND RESULTS OF LABORATORY RESEARCH UNDERWAY IN THE MEDICAL CENTER AND PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORIES OF THIS CITY ALONE WILL LEAD TO TECHNICAL, SERVICE, SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS DEMANDING INVESTMENT AND SKILLED PEPSONNEL.

ADDITIONALLY, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO ACCEPT THE PREMISE THAT TOO MUCH EDUCATION FOR TOO MANY MIGHT BE A BAD THING WHEN OUR NATION HAS PROVED THAT A BETTER EDUCATED WORK FORCE IS A PUSH (EXPECTATIONS) AND A PULL (QUALIFICATION/CAPABILITY) FACTOR IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RISING LIVING STANDARDS.

I MUST EMPHASIZE BETTER EDUCATED NOT SIMPLE INSTITUTIONALIZED IN SUB-QUALITY PROGRAMS--EQUIPMENT, METHODOLOGY.

ARE THERE PEOPLE ON OUR CAMPUSES WHO HAVE NO BUSINESS THERE, WHO FOR SOME REASON ARE UNQUALIFIED OR WHO ARE NOT SERIOUS STUDENTS? YES, OF COURSE, THAT IS PROBABLY THE CASE. I THINK THIS GROUP WOULD FORM A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF ANY TYPICAL COLLEGE STUDENT BODY. A GREATER PROBLEM, WHICH MAY BE TRAGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY AT LARGE, IS

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THE ABSENCE FROM OUR CAMPUSES OF THOSE WHO ON THE BASIS OF QUALIFICATIONS AND MOTIVATION, OUGHT TO BE THERE. THIS TOO MAY BE A SMALL PERCENTAGE--BUT A VERY IMPORTANT GROUP.

SPECIFICALLY REGARDING THE STATE OF INDIANA, CONSIDER THESE FACTORS:

-- IN 1977 ONLY 43 PERCENT OF INDIANA'S HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WENT ON TO COLLEGE. THE NATIONAL AVERAGE WAS 50 PERCENT.

-- IN 1981 ONLY 46 TO 47 PERCENT OF INDIANA'S HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WENT ON TO COLLEGE. THE NATIONAL AVERAGE WAS 53 PERCENT.

-- IN 1980 THE PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS 25 YEARS OR OLDER WITH AT LEAST THREE YEARS OF COLLEGE WAS 24.3 PERCENT IN INDIANA AND 31.9 PERCENT NATIONALLY.

-- INDIANA IS A LOW ENROLLMENT STATE RANKING 32ND FROM THE HIGHEST.

-- IN INDIANA, THE RATIO OF LESS EDUCATED PERSONS TO COLLEGE GRADUATES IS THREE TO ONE WHILE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IS TWO TO ONE.

HOW DOES ONE CALCULATE THE LOSS TO THE STATE AND NATION OF ALL THOSE HUMAN ENERGIES AND TALENTS, ALL THOSE HUMAN RESOURCES WHO REMAIN UNDEVELOPED

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BECAUSE FOR SOME REASON CITIZENS WITH POTENTIAL ABILITY COULD NOT OR WOULD NOT COME TO OUR CAMPUSES? HOW DOES ONE CALCULATE THE LOSS TO THE INDIVIDUALS THEMSELVES? AFTER ALL, A RECENT STUDY REPORTS COLLEGE GRADUATES:

-- CAN STILL EXPECT TO EARN $673,000 MORE OVER THEIR LIFETIME THAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES;

-- HAVE BETTER PROSPECTS OF FINDING A JOB;

-- HAVE BETTER PROSPECTS FOR PROMOTION.

IT MAY BE TEMPTING TO REDUCE THE MISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO FINANCIAL TERMS BUT TO DO SO SEPARATES EDUCATION FROM SUCH MATTERS AS

-- PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT;

-- HUMAN UNDERSTANDING;

-- DEVELOPING OF VALUES, MORALS AND LEADERSHIP.

IF AN EDUCATION MAKES OUR STUDENTS BETTER CITIZENS, BETTER CONSUMERS AND BETTER PARENTS, THE CRITICAL NEEDS OF SOCIETY ARE BETTER SERVED.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION MUST BE UNOBSTRUCTED. WHILE THIS PROUD GOAL OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION HAS NOT YET BEEN ACHIEVED, UNIVERSAL ACCESS FOR ALL SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY MUST REMAIN A GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF OUR

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COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

WE KNOW WE MUST SHIFT EMPHASIS FROM QUANTATIVE GROWTH--IN STUDENT NUMBERS, PROGRAMS AND INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEXITY--TO QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT. THE QUESTION--ECONOMIC OR ACADEMIC--IS NOT ARE WE OVER-EDUCATING, BUT HOW CAN WE DO A BETTER JOB, HOW CAN INSTITUTIONS FOSTER THE HIGHEST STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTION, RESEARCH AND SERVICE. HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT CAPABLE STUDENTS FIRED BY DESIRE FOR PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION ARE INVOLVED, CHALLENGED, EDUCATED AND HELPED TO GET A CAREER START.

WE DO NOT NEED MORE PROGRAMS, IN MY VIEW. WE NEED A TIGHTER SHIP. THIS INVOLVES HIGHER ACADEMIC STANDARDS AT OUR UNIVERSITIES AND A GREATER PERCEPTION IN OUR UNIVERSITIES AS TO HOW WE CAN BETTER SERVE SOCIETY. UNIVERSITIES ALREADY KNOW THEY MAY NEED TO FOCUS MORE NARROWLY THE SCOPE OF SOME OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND CONCENTRATE RESOURCES ON FEWER ACTIVITIES. MOST HAVE PLACED SUCH ADJUSTMENTS INTO EFFECT.

THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES ARE CONCERNED WITH THE ORDERING AND TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE AS WELL AS THE SEARCH FOR THE METHODS TO UTILIZE KNOWLEDGE. NOW AS WE SHIFT FROM AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY TO AN INFORMATION SOCIETY IN WHICH HUMAN RESOURCES ARE OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE AND VALUE, INFORMATION BECOMES THE BASIC CAPITAL, THE BASIC INGREDIENT TO OUR FUTURE

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DEVELOPMENT. THEREFORE, SUCH UNIVERSITIES MUST EMPHASIZE SOCIETY'S INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE, IN HUMAN CAPITAL. THIS HAS BECOME NOT ONLY A SOCIAL OBLIGATION TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS BUT ALSO A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT IN OUR NATIONAL SELF-INTEREST. HIGHER EDUCATION MUST PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN THE ACCELERATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF OUR ECONOMY. AND THIS INVOLVES NOT ONLY RESEARCH AND BROADLY BASED EDUCATION BUT ALSO:

-- RE-TRAINING FOR THE UNEMPLOYED;

-- UPGRADING OF WORKERS PRESENTLY EMPLOYED;

-- STRENGTHENING OF OUR BASIC SKILLS AND TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE;

-- IMPROVEMENT OF WORKER PRODUCTIVITY.

UNIVERSITIES MUST NOT IGNORE THE NEEDS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. WE BELIEVE THAT BEYOND OUR RESEARCH, WE MUST IMPROVE INSTRUCTION FOR TEACHERS IN MATH AND SCIENCE, COMMUNICATIONS AND INDEED HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT--A PRIMARY MISSION OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION--WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF DR. NEGLEY--WE ARE CREATING ON OUR BLOOMINGTON CAMPUS.

OVER-EDUCATION: INDEED!

FURTHERMORE, UNIVERSITIES CANNOT IGNORE THE 23 MILLION PEOPLE IN THIS

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NATION WHO ARE ILLITERATE. (SOME ESTIMATES RANGE AS HIGH AS 64 MILLION.) NEWLY DEVELOPED READING PROGRAMS PREPARED BY OUR UNIVERSITIES NEED TO BE MADE AVAILABLE IN MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS.

UNIVERSITIES CANNOT IGNORE THE GROWING NUMBERS WHO ARE RETURNING TO OUR CAMPUSES FOR CAREER RENEWAL AND RETRAINING. THE COLLEGE BOARD REPORTS AS MANY AS 25 MILLION WORKING ADULTS WILL SERIUOSLY CONSIDER COLLEGE ENROLLMENT WITHIN THE NEXT TEN YEARS. OBVIOUSLY THAT HAS FUNDAMENTAL BEARING REGARDING THE POTENTIAL STRENGTH OF OUR LABOR FORCE.

IT IS A FUNCTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO TEACH PEOPLE HOW TO MAINTAIN THEIR SKILLS OVER A LIFE-TIME. WHILE THAT IS AN ECONOMIC FUNCTION OF EDUCATION IT IS ALSO A HUMANE MISSION DESIGNED TO ELEVATE INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY TO REALIZE THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF ATTAINMENT.

THANK YOU.

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